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1918a

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# JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

UNITED STATES ARMY AND NAVY

D 639  
. J4 J45  
1918a  
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*Co-operating with and under the  
supervision of the War De-  
partment Commission  
on Training Camp  
Activities*



National Headquarters, 149-5th Ave., N.Y.

1918



WAR DEPARTMENT  
COMMISSION ON TRAINING CAMP ACTIVITIES  
WASHINGTON

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JASPER L. MAYER  
SECRETARY

Colonel Harry Cutler, Chairman,  
7 Eddy Street,  
Providence, R. I.

Dear Sir:

I am writing to reaffirm the arrangements made informally with your Board some months ago to the effect that this commission recognized your society as the official agency for Jewish welfare work in the military camps of the United States.

It is necessary for us, in each case, to deal with one such agency, so as to eliminate duplication of effort and overlapping of function. I trust that you will be able to co-ordinate all the activities along this special line which are seeking independently to work with Jewish soldiers in the camp.

Very truly yours,

*Raymond A. Fosbick*  
Chairman.

Facsimile Letter of Official Recognition of  
The Jewish Welfare Board



Gift  
Publisher

DEC 28 1938

# *Purpose, Scope and Achievement of the Jewish Welfare Board*

The Jewish Welfare Board is a welfare organization, co-operating with and under the supervision of the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities. It has been officially recognized by the War Department as the accredited agency for Jewish welfare work in camps and naval training stations. Like the Y. M. C. A. and K. of C., it ministers to the spiritual and recreational needs of all the men in the army and navy, but serving especially those of the Jewish faith.

## PURPOSE OF THE JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

To be with the Jewish soldier and sailor everywhere, aiding him, cheering him, inspiring him, serving him loyally and helpfully, and, through him, his country, and the ideals for which it stands—this is the purpose of the Jewish Welfare Board. Wherever the flag goes the Jewish Welfare Board follows, its workers ever ready to serve.

To adjust the soldiers and sailors of Jewish faith to their new surroundings; to maintain and encourage their religious convictions; to offer them the intimate human service of hospital visitation; to investigate real or fancied injustice; to aid in business matters; to advise in regard to insurance and pay-allotments; to help them in writing and transmission of letters, in questions of ethics or conscience, military matters, family troubles, loneliness or dejection; to give them material comforts, and inward consolation in all difficulties; to provide them with wholesome recreation and entertainment in their free time; to obtain for them

the entree into congenial homes; to bring to them the personal service of friendly understanding and brotherly guidance; to assure them of the organized aid available for their families and dependents; to voice their devotion to the cause of America and her Allies; to afford a medium for the organized patriotic expression of the great American Jewish community in war service—*these* are some of the functions of the Jewish Welfare Board.

In all its work, the Jewish Welfare Board seeks to take nothing from the scope of any other welfare agency, but rather to cooperate and to make a well-fitting part in a harmonious whole. It distinctly opposes segregation of the Jew from his Gentile brother-in-arms. Its aim is to help the Jewish boy to understand and sympathize with those about him and to be in turn understood by them.

"If you do not intend to segregate the Jewish youth, then why a Jewish Welfare Board?" critics have asked. Dr. John R. Mott, general director of the United War Work campaign and general secretary of the Y. M. C. A., gives the answer. "The most distinctive vital function of the Jewish Welfare Board is the safeguarding and developing of the religious life and convictions of your men. This cannot be done by any other organization or worker. It is a matter of utmost importance, and fully justifies you in developing and carrying out a program to make it possible."

### CO-ORDINATION OF JEWISH WORK

The Jewish Welfare Board was organized in the spring of 1917 to unite all elements of American Jewry into one large responsible and representative war welfare body. It coordinates and organizes the good-will of individuals, communities, and organizations into a centralized working force which has concentrated the activities of all Jewish organizations in welfare work for soldiers and sailors and their families. Participating in its councils and administration and represented on its Executive Committee are the following organizations: Central Conference of American Rabbis,

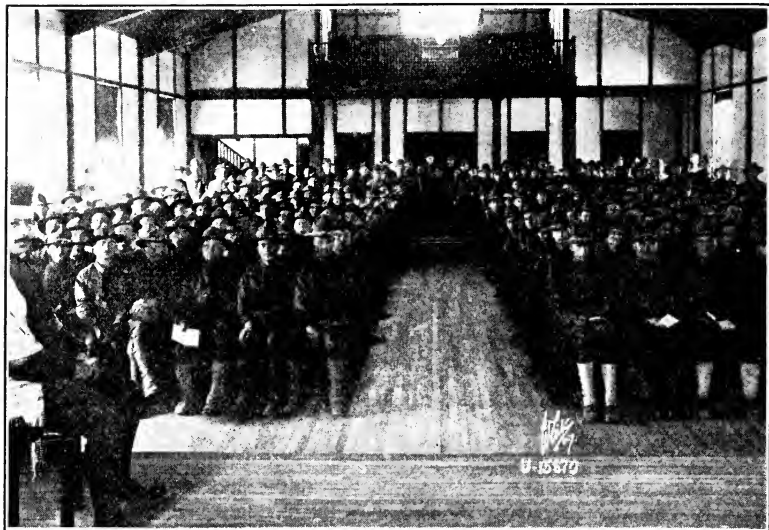
Council of Y. M. H. A. and Kindred Associations, Council of Jewish Women, Agudath Ha-Rabbonim, Independent Order Brith Abraham, Independent Order B'nai Brith, Independent Order Brith Sholom, Jewish Publication Society of America, Jewish Chautauqua Society, National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, New York Board of Jewish Ministers, Order Brith Abraham, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations and United Synagogue of America.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Colonel Harry Cutler, of Providence, R. I., is Chairman of the Board; Dr. Cyrus Adler, of Philadelphia, Vice-Chairman; Chester Jacob Teller, of New York City, Secretary; Walter E. Sachs, of New York, Treasurer. The members of the Executive Committee are: Henry J. Bernheim, I. Edwin Goldwasser, Charles Hartman, Justice Irving Lehman, Rabbi M. S. Margolies, Rabbi D. De Sola Pool, Joseph Rosenzweig, Mortimer L. Schiff, Abram I. Elkus, Rabbi Maurice H. Harris, Louis E. Kirstein, Louis Marshall, Rabbi William Rosenau, Bernard Semel, Israel Unterberg, Dr. Boris D. Bogen and Morris Rothenberg.

The Executive Committee operates through five main committees, having under their direction publicity and propaganda, religious activities, general activities, finance and buildings. There is a special Committee on Chaplains, and another special Committee on Personnel.

For the purposes of more intensive organization of the field work, both in the Jewish communities and in the cantonments, the country has been divided into five sections, each of which is in charge of a travelling field supervisor, whose duty it is to go among the communities and camps, to superintend and perfect the detailed organization of work. The Field Supervisors consult with the Field Representatives and community organizations, offering them advice, instructions and the encouragement of personal contact.

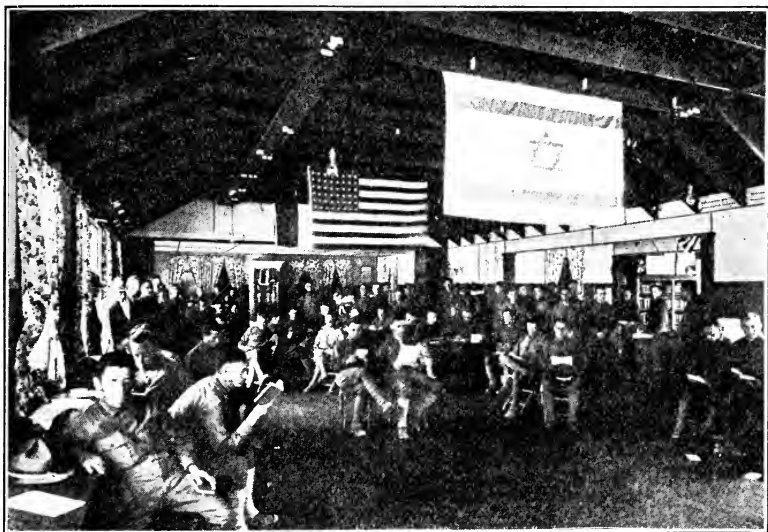


Services Interdenominational Chapel, Camp Upton, L. I.

## TRAINING WELFARE WORKERS

Upon the calibre and training of its representatives in the field the success of the Jewish Welfare Board in a large measure depends. To meet the need for trained men, the Board maintains a training-school for workers at its headquarters—149 Fifth Ave., N. Y., which provides a practical preliminary course in the history and policies of the movement, and problems of camp and town work, and also supplies the workers with a Jewish historical and cultural background. The object of this school is to train as rapidly as possible the largest number of men able to fulfil the obligations and duties of Jewish Welfare Workers. Each month more than twenty-five field representatives are trained at the school. Men of experience and substantial reputation in the fields





J. W. B. Reading and Lounging Room, Camp Meade, Maryland

of Jewish religion, education, and social welfare are the instructors.

In four weeks of intensive training, lectures are given on the different theories of Americanization and assimilation, emphasizing the point of view of the immigrant; on the Jewish attitude toward war and peace; on the principles and purposes of the Jewish Welfare Board, on the causes and aims of the war; on army rules and etiquette, on social hygiene, and on various phases of Jewish Welfare Board work. Before they are assigned to military posts, the men are sent to camps in the vicinity of New York for practical field training.

The first Jewish Welfare Board workers to go into camps were for the most part volunteers. To-day more than two hundred and fifty trained workers minister to the needs of the Jewish man in

uniform. In the olive drab uniform of the Jewish Welfare Worker one finds rabbis, social workers, lawyers, journalists, teachers, college graduates whose interests lie mainly along lines of humanitarian helpfulness, and successful business men with executive ability and knowledge of management of men.

## WELFARE WORKERS

The "Star of David Man," as the Jewish Welfare Worker is familiarly known, is spiritual leader, teacher, guide, counsellor, and friend to boys from all stations of life and of all shades of thought. Everything from leading a "minyan" to staging a boxing bout for the entertainment of the boys falls within the province of the Jewish Welfare Board workers. Although an outline scarcely describes his services, the work of the field representative may be briefly set forth as follows:

### 1.—*Religious Work at the Camps*

- (a) Friday Evening Services
- (b) Sabbath Services
- (c) Yahrzeit (Memorial) Services
- (d) Daily Services
- (c) Holyday Services

### 2.—*Educational Work*

- (a) English to foreigners or illiterates
- (b) French Classes
- (c) American History and Civics
- (d) Classes in Military Tactics
- (e) Bible Study and Jewish History

### 3.—*Social and Recreational Activities*

- (a) Literary Clubs
- (b) Discussion groups
- (c) Entertainments
- (d) Concerts

- (e) Secular Celebrations of Jewish Holidays
- (f) Athletic Concerts
- (g) Dances

#### 4.—*Personal Service*

- (a) Guard House
- (b) Hospital
- (c) Information
- (d) Legal Advice
- (e) General Personal Service

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Every Jewish religious observance of greater or minor significance is marked by services in the camps. The Jewish Welfare Board supplies Prayer Books, Bibles and special literature, and other essentials to Orthodox and Reform observants. It arranges with the War and Navy Departments for Holyday furloughs for Jewish men on Rosh Hashonah, Yom Kippur, and Passover, and wherever expedient the men are allowed to go home for the duration of their furlough. For the other men homes and synagogues are thrown open in the towns near cantonments. The community branches of the Jewish Welfare Board working with the Camp Representatives bring the soldier or sailor back into the holyday atmosphere of home.

## EDUCATIONAL WORK

Hundreds of men are sent to camp with a scant knowledge of English. They are unable even to understand the commands of their officers. The Jewish Welfare Worker, who knows their racial characteristics and speaks their language, serves as a point of contact. Under his guidance English classes are organized. Classes in Civics and American History are part of the educational program, while classes in French, mathematics, and military tactics and procedure are valuable aids to Uncle Sam in

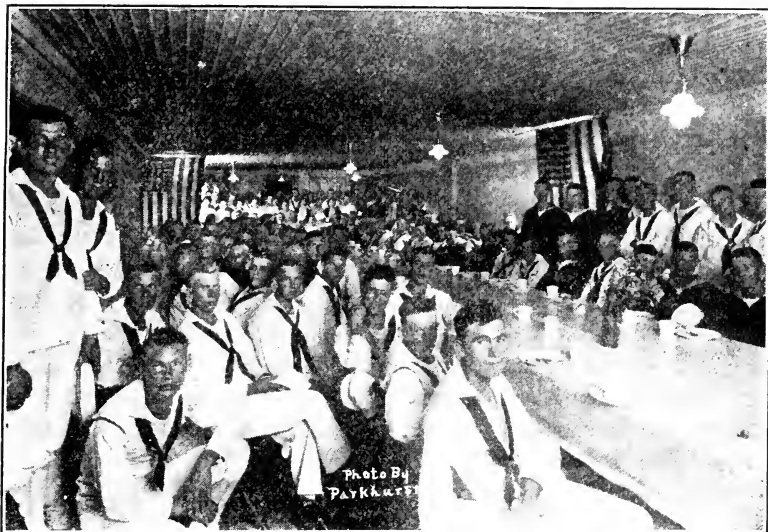


An Evening at a J. W. B. Center

the making of good soldiers. They often pave the way to promotion for the diligent student. All of these classes are non-sectarian and are conducted for all boys who care to take advantage of them. For the Jewish boys particularly, the Jewish Welfare Board representatives organize Bible Study and Jewish History classes.

### SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL WORK

The Jewish Welfare Board works with the Y. M. C. A. and K. of C. to provide wholesome entertainment at the cantonments. Dances, athletic contests, and entertainments are arranged for all boys regardless of faith, in the buildings of anyone of the co-operating organizations. Jewish concerts, to which Jewish leaders in theatrical and musical circles have contributed, are features of the Jewish Welfare Board's recreational program. For boys



Sunday Night "Chow" at J. W. B. Center

whose preferences run to literary evenings, clubs and discussion groups are organized. The Double Triangle of the Jewish Welfare Board spells education and recreation to the boy in camp.

### PERSONAL SERVICES

Countless anxieties hang over the head of the boy who has just donned the uniform of his country's service. A multitude of perplexities must be solved for him by the Welfare worker. The biggest task of all is that of rendering personal service. An allotment that goes astray; a business that threatens to be sacrificed because its owner has been drafted; sickness and poverty at home; disagreements between a soldier and his family; a sick boy in the hospital; an occasional marriage; a will; the solemn last rite of burial; all these and countless other situations call for the resourcefulness of the Jewish Welfare Board worker.

There was the case of "Bennie," who was being treated at a base hospital for mental aphasia. The "Star of David Man" visited him daily, cheered him and gained his confidence, until the melancholy was dispelled and "Bennie" commenced to take an interest in the things about him. His nurse insists that sympathy and understanding affected the cure where medical skill had failed.

When a private, whose English was exceedingly faulty, could not understand the command of his sergeant, he was openly insulted before his regiment. The Jewish Welfare Board representative took up the case with the Commanding Officer. The sergeant was demoted and a precedent established that made racial discrimination practically a breach of military discipline. Supplementing the field personal service work, there is an information service bureau at National Headquarters to which hundreds come for varied information and advice.

### IN THE NAVY

The Jewish Welfare Board is also at work among sailors. Not only is the organization carrying on its regular schedule of religious, educational, and recreational work at Naval Training Stations and Naval Bases, but programs are made up with reference to the special regulations of the Navy. Relations have been established at the Central Office for the men aboard thirty United States warships. These men are supplied with stationery, Bibles, prayer books, Jewish literature, reading matter, games, comfort kits, and phonograph records.

A Navy Department has been established at National Headquarters which is working out plans for more extensive work on shipboard and in Naval Bases and Training Stations.

### WELFARE BOARD BUILDINGS

In all of the largest cantonments the Jewish Welfare Board has established its own quarters in a building or tent, which serves

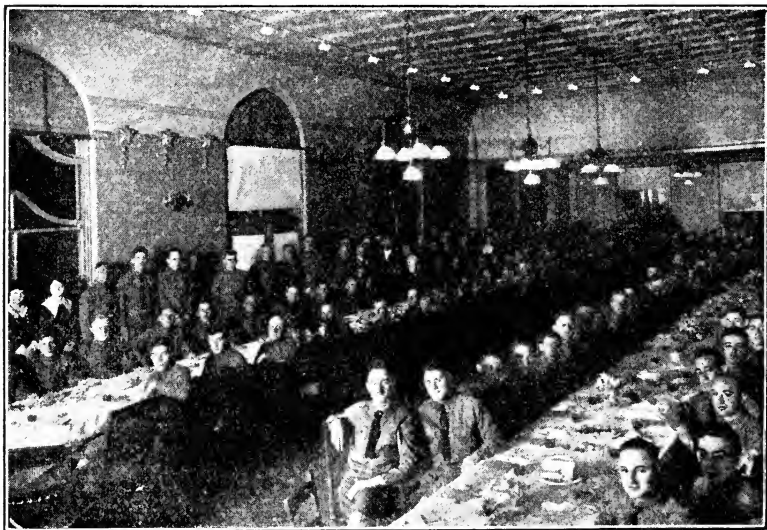
both as an administrative and a recreational center. With the expansion of its work and the increased number of Jewish boys in the services, the need for additional housing facilities became apparent. In May, 1918, the Jewish Welfare Board was a year old. A general order was issued by the United States War Department permitting it to erect buildings in camps for recreational, religious, and administrative purposes, and a large number of buildings was authorized.

Camp Upton, Yaphank, L. I., was the first cantonment to have a Jewish Welfare Board building of its own, and others followed in quick succession. The first Jewish Welfare Board building at a naval station was erected at Pelham Bay. The beginning of 1919 will see over one hundred Jewish Welfare buildings in camps and naval training stations, and in the Jewish communities.

### COMMUNITY BRANCHES

Of equal importance with the work performed in the cantonments is the organization of the Jewish communities either adjacent to camps or distant from them. Practically every community of considerable Jewish population is now doing its share as a branch of the Jewish Welfare Board toward making the life of a soldier and sailor comfortable and pleasant. The New York City Branch, for example, has turned a five-story city building into a hospitality house and information center for soldiers and sailors and their relatives, and is operating canteens and community centers for the Jewish uniformed men in sections of the city that have a congested Jewish population.

To arrange for the entertainment, in Jewish homes, of men on leave; to provide amusements to which groups of men may be invited; to furnish suitable and abundant reading matter; to arrange for the visiting to the camps of rabbis and public speakers to address the men on various subjects; to arrange for religious services on the Sabbath and Holy Days, supplementing the ser-



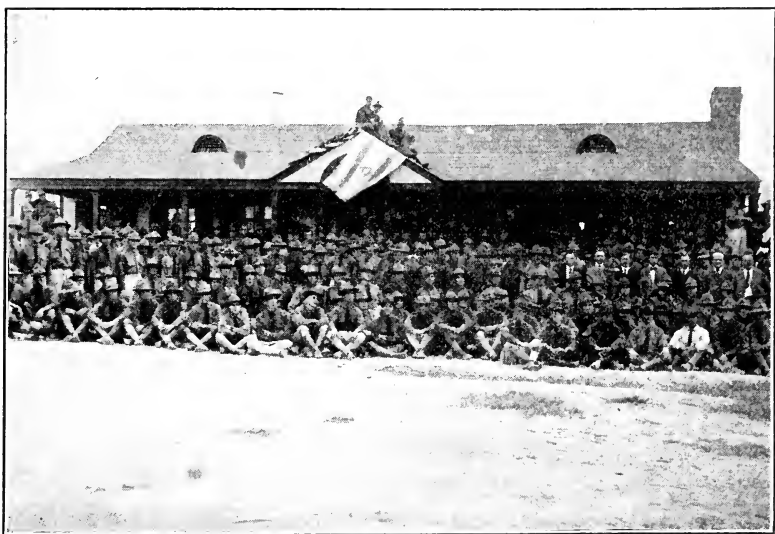
Holiday Feast, auspices of J. W. B. Town Branch

vices in the camps; to provide hospitality and entertainment for boys on Holyday furloughs; to care for the dependents of the boys who have marched away; to do social work among the boys themselves, in camp hospital and guard house; to offer the soldiers all the resources of the community—these are some of the functions of the Jewish Welfare Board Community Branch.

### WORK AMONG GENTILE RUSSIANS

The Jewish Welfare Board has organized a program of welfare work among gentile Russians in army camps and Slavic community centers. The Russian Aid Bureau Branch is sending welfare workers into army camps throughout the country to conduct educational and recreational activities and to aid the unassimilated Russian in adapting himself to his new environment. Central





J. W. B. Building at Camp Hancock

offices of the Branch are being opened in the Russian quarter of New York City and in every community where there is a considerable Russian population. Information Bureaus are being instituted to assist men of draft age in filling out the questionnaires and in solving the perplexities that arise from military regulations.

### OVERSEAS PLANS

Successful in camp and town, the Jewish Welfare Board has been extending its work overseas. It has opened headquarters at 41 Boulevard Haussman, Paris. One hundred Welfare Workers, recruited by a general appeal, are being sent overseas. In France, the Jewish Welfare Board operates through the overseas organization of the Y. M. C. A. and K. of C., using the huts of these organizations and supplementing their work by stepping in where a Jewish organization can serve most satisfactorily.

A Women's Division for overseas work has been organized to send abroad a unit of one hundred women workers to care for the women of belligerent countries, and to do special work among the Jewish men in the service. The Council of Jewish Women, Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, and Y. W. H. A. are co-operating in the plan.

In London a Hospitality Center has been opened by a group of leading British Jews, working unofficially in co-operation with the Jewish Welfare Board. An Information Center, reading and writing and rest rooms welcome and assist the American boy, who is a stranger in the big city.

The Jewish Welfare Board is also co-operating with the recently organized French Commission of Jews, with Chief Rabbi Israel Levi, of France, at its head. This commission has established a community center in Paris for soldiers of Jewish faith of all allies now in France.

Among the achievements of the Jewish Welfare Board overseas was the official substitution of a "Mogen Dovid" instead of a cross over Jewish graves and the securing of furloughs and opportunities for holyday observance for the Jewish members of the American Expeditionary Forces on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur. The five Jewish chaplains then in France, and prominent New York rabbis who represented the Welfare Board, conducted services for the troops at various points, and French synagogues and homes were thrown open to the Americans. The Jewish Welfare Board has recommended twenty-five Jewish chaplains to the War Department and it has secured an order substituting the "Star of David" and the Tablets of the Law for the Cross as an insignia of Jewish chaplains.

## DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES

In one-half year, the Jewish Welfare Board sent out through the Central Office over 100,000 prayer books, 80,000 Bibles, over

3,000,000 letter-heads, and 1,500,000 envelopes. The prayer books and Bibles have both been warmly welcomed by the soldiers, who have found Jewish inspiration in them and by religious leaders and laymen of all denominations.

Standard libraries in Yiddish and English have been shipped to all camps through the co-operation of the Jewish Publication Society and the American Library Association. Forty thousand Yiddish translations of the Government Allotment, Compensation and Insurance Laws and a translation of pamphlets on Sex Hygiene in Yiddish have been distributed. Jewish newspapers and periodicals have been forwarded through the courtesy of their publishers. Many special articles requested by the soldiers, such as mezussas, tsisith, tefillin, special prayer books and Bibles in the original Hebrew have also been forwarded.

### APPRECIATION OF J. W. B.

It is impossible to estimate the influence and benefits of the Jewish Welfare Board. Every mail brings letters from the boys in the service who have high praise for the efforts of the Jewish Welfare Board. "I can't tell you what it meant to me to find the friendly smile and welcome hand of your boys," a soldier said before he sailed to the dangers overseas. "It is a comfort to know that although it is an impossibility for me to be with my son, there are others who are keeping a watchful eye over him," wrote a soldier's mother. A young dentist, who had been disinterested in Jewish institutions, experienced a complete reversal of opinion when he came in contact with the Jewish Welfare Board. He wrote of the strangeness and difficulties of his new camp life and the facility with which the Jewish Welfare Board overcame them all. He added: "I am sorry that I cannot express to you all that the Jewish soldier feels toward the Jewish Welfare Board." "There is a debt of gratitude that we owe you, who are so anxious

to make our boys feel at home." This from a sister of a soldier. A Catholic writing to the Jewish Welfare Board before his departure for France said: "I cannot help expressing my heartiest thanks to all your secretaries for what they have done for me."

Among the boys overseas religious regeneration is at work. In the lonely watches of "No Man's Land" they are finding God. Their gratitude for prayer books, Bibles, and for the Jewish chaplains who are sent over by the War Department is sincere and deep.

Reaching the hearts of men, serving loyally and helpfully in the nation's crisis, linking together American Jewry in a great cause the Jewish Welfare Board stands as a spontaneous and wholehearted expression of the Jewish men and women of this country.

Our boys cannot be the less American because they are the more Jewish; they realize that they are all soldiers of America, fighting or ready to fight and die, if need be, in the cause of America. They want to be brothers to the Protestant, to the Catholic, to the men of all faiths, who are at their side. They wish to enjoy the friendship and respect of their associates and of their superiors. The Jewish Welfare Board sees that they do all these things while retaining the identity of their faith and remaining staunch Jews and Americans loyal to the highest ideals of democratic citizenship.

From a small organization with a small staff and a handful of welfare workers, the organization has grown to a huge welfare agency, with representatives in practically every camp and naval training station with branches in every large city of the country and with work that is being extended overseas. The Jewish Welfare Board, organized in a moment of national emergency has become an achievement of American Jewish life, brought about by wholehearted devotion and service to those who are ready to make the great sacrifice for country and God.

WAR DEPARTMENT.  
WASHINGTON.

November 20, 1917

Colonel Harry Cutler  
Eddy Street  
Providence  
R. I.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Foadick has told me of the effective activity of the Jewish Board for Welfare Work in coordinating the various Jewish agencies which have sought recognition for work inside our military training camps. In order to prevent duplication of effort, it was necessary to deal with a single agency, broad enough in its scope and organization to comprehend other groups seeking to do the same kind of work. For that reason, we were very glad when such men as Mr. Jacob Schiff, Mr. Felix Warburg and yourself, came forward with this plan for a Jewish Board for Welfare Work, and I am only too glad to congratulate you on what has been accomplished, and to wish you every success in your coordinating activities.

Cordially yours,

  
Secretary of War

Letter of Congratulation from Secretary of War Newton D. Baker



*"There aren't sufficient words to express adequately my pleasure and joy in learning that my son has in so short a time found such hospitable friends in his new temporary abode. It is not without many a heartache that a mother gives up her son, and mine has been doubled, since I have given one to the army and one to the navy. Institutions such as the Jewish Welfare Board cast a ray of sunshine, especially at this time when the horizon seems to be covered with dark clouds of war."*—

*From the mother of two patriots.*

Hollinger  
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